Preface

This book is at once sharply focused and wide-angled. It is an analysis of Raphael's *Portrait of Pope Julius II* in the National Gallery at London and a case study in the content and context of High Renaissance portraiture. It is also an essay in cultural history broadly defined, for like the microcosms Renaissance writers discerned in very particular things, Raphael's *Julius* opens whole worlds worth exploring.

Raphael's portrait is full of messages from Renaissance culture in part because the circumstances in which it was made were so full. At the earliest date -27 June 1511—when the painter could have begun his work, Pope Julius had ruled eight years at his furious pace, "the eighth wonder of the world," a Renaissance pope in all his roles but always in his own way. Contemporaries had already found it easy to speak of a new Golden Age or to fear the coming of the Apocalypse. During the nine-month period in which the London panel was apparently painted, the character of the pope and the culture of Julian Rome were being tested more intensely than ever. Instead of triumphs everywhere, now there were challenges on every side. In northern Italy papal territory only recently regained by Julius himself had been lost to the French. A council of schismatic cardinals was xvi Preface

meeting at Pisa. The pope was struck by a nearly fatal illness, and Rome flew into revolt. The resources of the papacy were strained to the breaking point. By March 1512 the situation was still in some doubt, still near the beginning of what was to seem a miraculous series of victories before Julius's death in February 1513.

The time had been right for taking a full measure of the man and the pope. But the London portrait also coincided with Raphael's arrival at new heights of achievement in the company of an extraordinary group of artists working in a High Renaissance style. A brief, classical moment held visions empirical and ideal in balance. The great Julian projects were under way. Some commissions were complete, or nearly so, and all were to be new classics in their own right-Bramante's Belvedere and St. Peter's; Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling and tomb for Julius; Raphael's own fresco cycles for the papal apartments in the Vatican palace, the Stanza della Segnatura and the Stanza d'Eliodoro. The Julian additions to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo seem relatively minor only in comparison with the overwhelming scale of what was happening elsewhere in Rome. By September 1513, and probably during Julius's lifetime, the panel now in the National Gallery had entered the church which had long been a favorite sanctuary and Roman showplace of the pope and his Della Rovere relations.

No Renaissance figure had inspired (or provoked) a more vivid response than the papa terribile. There were other painted portraits of the pope besides the London likeness, at least five of them by Raphael

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himself. Medals, coins, drawings, woodcuts, and sculpture also displayed the papal image. Vignettes in words appeared in chronicles, histories, memoirs, literary works, sermons, and letters. We even have the perspective from the diaries of a papal master of ceremonies, and to counteract the flattery of courtiers and would-be clients we have the antidote of critical tracts and satire. One of a kind, Raphael's picture should be seen in light of this rich and many-sided record of the Julian Age.

This is not the usual view. The relevant volume of Ludwig von Pastor's monumental History of the Popes is still a valuable mine of information, but it is also fragmented in form and apologetic in tone. From more recent historians we must make do with more or less casual profiles, passing references, and a few specialized monographs. From the art historians, who could hardly be expected to slight one of the great moments in the history of art, there is no shortage of very good work on individual artists or commissions in Julian Rome. What is usually lacking is a thoroughgoing concern for the historical setting and the interrelationships of form, content, and style. The only recent writing on Raphael's Julius, for example, is brief and mainly devoted to the art historical detective work which established some ten years ago that the National Gallery panel, among several extant versions, was Raphael's original. It is as if the Julian world were too vast for the farreaching kind of inquiry it deserves. Perhaps only the range of scholarly specialization has become too small

It is a welcome sign, though not always a very

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carefully articulated one, that some current attempts to see art in context take wide-ranging views of culture. The best of these are more likely to speak of complicated circumstances than of single causes. They have made issues of the cultural themes and cognitive skills peculiar to different times and places, the patronage and commissioning of culture, and the particular functions of art. Individual works have been reconsidered, as art certainly, but also as artifacts. In this spirit we mean to cross and combine different kinds of evidence and lines of approach, keeping Raphael's Julius in sight, but moving from it to the concerns of the culture around it, and back again. By varying the levels of analysis we hope to avoid the narrowness of purely formal, iconographical, or "sociological" explanations, and to confront something of the sheer complexity of whatever men have made. By concentrating on a single object we hope to respect the integrity of the work of art, to resist losing it either in the high abstraction of a prescriptive period style or in historical detail.

In the newly restored radiance of Raphael's portrait masterpiece both art and culture shine through.

However small, this book has accumulated large debts. Its origins go back at least to Harvard, to Myron Gilmore and to Sydney Freedberg, Master of Seeing. It owes much to the patience of our Berkeley undergraduates, who have often had good reason to wonder whether two heads, historian's and art historian's, were better than one. To the "Julian Institute" of our joint graduate seminar special thanks, in par-

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